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THE aged and majestic figure of the Nineteenth Century could be seen through the portals of the Throne Room, which opened ever and anon to admit or to dismiss the innumerable visitors. I watched them as they pressed in on their various quests ere it was too late to obtain favours from the beneficent hands of the Sovereign whose reign had been so matchless in the annals of the world's history, but whose heralds were even now proclaiming that the time was at hand when she would depart and be no more known amongst us.

Monarchs and statesmen, scientists and poets, warriors and theologians all crowded in

—all had some question to ask, some boon to crave from one who had been as a mother to them all, and in whose calm, grand countenance there seemed to mingle infinite knowledge, infinite love, and infinite faith in the future, and at the same time an inexpressible longing and yearning for the children whom she had nurtured, and whom she must ere long yield to the care of an unknown and untried ruler.

Even as I watched, the doors swung wide open once more and there entered a train of eager, bright-faced youths and maidens. I followed to hear what these might have to seek from the venerable age-worn Monarch. Methought her face grew tender as she watched the approaching troop, and she motioned those around to stand aside whilst she gently welcomed them and said :

“What would ye, my children?”

And making obeisance, they made answer :

“Ah Mother, great Mother of us all, we come to thee who alone canst guide us to her whom we seek. We have heard that through

all the years of this century thou hast been preparing a great gift for the children of thy youth and that far away in the north country over the seas thou hast been training and watching over a fair young Queen whom thou dost destine to bring light and beauty and riches and hope to such who know how to seek her aright. Tell us, oh tell us of 'Our Lady of the Sunshine' and of how we may become worthy to seek her. How shall we find her? How shall we know her? And how may we gain her favor?

And as she heard these words, the great Sovereign slowly rose and spoke :

"Children, and have ye indeed heard of her in whom is my delight and would ye woo her? True it is that it has ever been to the golden West that the nations of the world have pressed, true it is that the sceptre of the North must ever have pre-eminence !

"But how shall I describe to you her whom ye are seeking, and how shall I show you the power by which her rule shall be made great !

“Think then of a broad, stately river whose banks on one side can scarce be discerned by those standing on the other, and picture wide stretches of long cultivated fields clothed with low white houses and tiny bright shining spires all bathed with the rosy flush of sunlight penetrating and permeating long rounded pink masses of clouds hanging close over the ranges of mountains behind !

“Think of battlements and citadels surmounting an old time city of bright metallic roofs clustered on cliffs over a broad sweep of water and the whole heaven and earth and river illuminated with a crimson sunset glow !

“Think of wide provinces studded with homesteads in the midst of smiling orchards and harvest fields and pastures—a country side which inevitably brings the thought of sunshine with it.

“Or, come further west, and see thousands of acres of wheat ripening in a light all too fierce for denizens of greyer climes, but which

penetrating into the rich soil prepares food for millions who dream not of its power !

“See the vast prairies blossoming into myriad colors, see the grim mountain tops melting into beauty, see the thick forests pierced by her strength, see the unknown lands of the great West yielding to the touch of ‘Our Lady of the Sunshine’ and blessing the world with their produce—and learn how to know her.

“ But learn, too, to know her in yet another garb. Behold her covering up her vast domains in the warm folds of mothering snow and then see our ‘Sunshine’ come tripping forth awakening the country with the music of her sleigh-bells, and with the laughter of her children as they gain health and strength and prowess in the sports in which she rejoices. You may shrink from her in her fierce consuming mid-summer mood, you may love her as she prevails over you in her sweet spring garb, you may rejoice over her rich handiwork in the autumn, but you will see her in her glory as you perceive that ‘Our Lady of the

Sunshine ' is also ' Our Lady of the Snows '—
It is then that she is preparing her plenteous
harvests, and it is then that she is training her
sons and daughters to endurance and to joyful
service."

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She paused, and then bending tenderly
towards the entranced faces of the youthful
petitioners, she continued :

" Would ye seek her, my children ? Would
ye become her leal subjects ?

" Then hear somewhat more of what I would
require of those who enter her kingdom.

" Her realms are wide, her resources are
vast, and sown within her borders are the
seeds of a mighty nation.

" There have I planted of the fairest and
boldest of my children from the old world,
and there in freedom are Celt and Saxon,
Frank and Teuton learning to live together in
unity.

" I would fain live to see the golden future
of the people reigned over by my daughter of

the Sunshine. But beware ye of marring her work—she will fill the land with plenty, she will endue her subjects with strength of body and strength of mind through her gracious influences, but she needs loyal followers for the perfecting of her work. Will ye serve her? Will ye toil for her, following loyally in the steps of her noble pioneers, winning her lands for her by persistent labor? Will ye uphold her just laws? Will you be fellow-workers with her and spread her rule by the influence of sunshine and love? Will ye ‘lay your hands in hers and swear to reverence her as your own conscience and your conscience as your Queen?’

“Will you uphold the Christ within that realm?

“If ye will do these things then go, seek ‘Our Lady of the Sunshine’ and take my blessing with you, for even as the hour of my departure grows near do I see the coming fulfilment of the fair vision of which I have so ofttime dreamt.

“There yet may come—

A glorious company, the flower of men,
To serve as model to the mighty world
And be the fair beginning of a time

when the mighty peoples of the West shall
join with the sea-girt Island Empire to pro-
claim Peace throughout the world.

“Go, my children, I command you, bear
my benediction and your own to ‘Our Lady
of the Sunshine.’”

ISHBEL ABERDEEN

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